

THE PROPOSED ZOOLOGICAL STATION AT SYDNEY.

BY N. DE MIKLOUHO-MACLAY.

No one to whom the progress of Biology is not a matter of indifference, will be surprised that I again take up the subject of the foundation of a Zoological Station in Sydney. It is an Institution too important for all branches of Biology for the idea to be dropped.

That the *urgent necessity* of the matter is already understood, and the idea here and there is coming to a practical issue, witness the Zoological Stations in Europe and America, about the institution of which news has appeared in various periodicals since the 26th of August last year, when I first had the honor to direct the attention of the Society to this subject. [Vide "Nature," August 29th, 1878.]

Some days ago I had the pleasure of reading in "Nature" () a communication concerning the Zoological Station in Naples. I am very much pleased that it has fallen to the lot of my friend, Dr. A. Dohrn, to have made himself in so high a degree useful to science. It is in truth a splendid result; about a hundred investigators have availed themselves of this opportunity to prosecute scientific investigations, of which, had this opportunity not offered itself, but few would have been carried out. So much the more must one treasure such a service as it is so far removed from egotism, and is the outcome of honest love of science, and a proper understanding of its needs.

The same scheme with which I came before the Linnean Society five and a half months ago, I have also sent to Japan to the German Eastern-Asiatic Society, and propose also sending it to M. A. Godeffroy in Samoa, and I have reason to believe that my proposals will not be without result in both places. The

combined working of these three or four Zoological Stations, Japan for the northern, Samoa for the tropical, Sydney (also if possible in course of time in some place in New Zealand) for the southern region of the Pacific, will result in a few years in presenting us with a very complete conception of the fauna of the Pacific!

But as regards the question: *What has been done during these last five or six months for the foundation of a Zoological Station in Sydney?* I must answer with regret—*nothing!*

It is true that the Hon. Wm. Macleay has not neglected to place at the disposal of any bona-fide investigator his museum, library, and microscopes. Mr. W. A. Haswell and I have made use of this liberal permission. Mr. E. P. Ramsay has afforded me the opportunity of carrying on my work in the Australian Museum; the Trustees of that Institution have entered also in a most obliging manner into several of my projects. While expressing the most heartfelt thanks to all these gentlemen, I can, however, only repeat that *nothing* has yet been done for the Zoological Station in Sydney.

It would be a *total* misunderstanding of what is wanted, a bitter satire on the idea of a Zoological Station, to call the present working-places "Temporary Zoological Stations."

The nearly six months of my stay have confirmed my conviction that Sydney is an important and extremely convenient locality for a Zoological Station.

My intended short visit in Sydney has, nolens volens, on account of the interesting and valuable material, lengthened itself out to a stay of about half a year. A few dredging excursions in Port Jackson have shown me how rich and varied the marine fauna here is.

When I speak again on this theme—of the foundation of a Zoological Station—I assuredly do not address myself specially to the Linnean Society of New South Wales. I only embrace

this opportunity to lay the matter earnestly before *every friend* of Biological Science in Australia. For science it is of no moment whether A or B does it; whether in this case Mr. Macleay, or the Trustees of the Australian Museum, or anyone else, takes upon him this important task. But to me as a stranger, it is easier to look at the whole matter impartially in a true light, and rightly to judge of the great advantages for the progress of science of a Station in Australia. But at the same time to me as a stranger, the ways and means for attaining the desired end are less known than to most of the gentlemen present. On that account I leave this part of the matter to those who are more competent; but I declare myself ready willingly to do everything that stands in my power for this project:—where science is concerned, all trifling considerations as a matter of course must give way. As the continuation of my journey will probably not allow me the pleasure of being present when a Zoological Station is definitely instituted, perhaps I may be allowed to indicate some points which must be borne in mind in connection with the arrangement and use of the future Station:

1.—It is very desirable (and every diligent investigator will share the opinion) that the opportunity should be offered to each man of science making use of the Station, if even with the minimum of comfort, to *live in the station itself*. It is in my opinion a *very* important point: in the first place a very great saving of time will result, and in the second the investigator will thus be in a position to lose *no* moment in which he feels himself to be in the mood most suitable for work.

2.—A supply of glasses should be purchased wholesale, in order that they may be lent to the investigators making use of the Station, or sold to them at wholesale price. Spirits of wine and other preservative media should also be obtained wholesale, and be free to the workers at wholesale price.

3.—The material used for investigation, if it is left behind by the investigators, should either (as may frequently be the case) be put aside as an interesting anatomical *preparation* in a permanent collection in the Zoological Station, or if it is worth the cost of preservation (the price of the spirit) be kept as *material*.

I have not grudged the time for going into these details, for I am so perfectly convinced of the absolute necessity of the Zoological Station, that I merely regard its foundation as a matter of time, and also because everything that I say here for the future Station in Sydney applies to any other (Japan, Islands of the Pacific, &c.) The interval between the bringing forward of my proposal (September, 1878,) and the actual foundation will afford a good test of the degree and intensity of scientific life in Australia—at least in Sydney.

Mr. Archer considered it a singular coincidence that while Baron Mielouho-Maclay had been pressing so ably on the attention of the Scientific Societies of the City, the necessity for a Zoological Station at Sydney, he should have received from so eminent an authority on Aquaria as Mr. Lloyd a letter expressing his desire to see an Aquarium established on the shores of Port Jackson.

* * * “It is a matter greatly to be regretted that you possess no such means, as we have here, for observing the lower forms of animal life, in a living state. I shall be most happy to contribute in any way in my power to the establishment of an Aquarium which would afford facilities for observing the interesting, and little known fauna of Australia.” * * *

A conversation of an interesting nature ensued in which Dr. Cox and others took part, discussing the best means for ensuring the desired result.